

Information questions from Judy Allen, Historic Projects Officer of CN on 7-6-2022 at the Crowder Center.

James Bench, Choctaw veteran from Canadian, Oklahoma, served in the United States Navy from 1957 to 1961, where he achieved the rank of Seaman. He served in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and the Philippines. Bench was stationed on the USS Reaper, a mine sweeper ship, then the USS Pledge, where he remained until his discharge in 1961.

Bench received the honor of being named Choctaw Nation Veteran of the Month in 2020.

“I had a hard time growing up in Hinton, Oklahoma. I had to work in a cotton patch, which I dreaded! The Navy looked pretty good to me, so I enlisted.”

His parents were Emmitt and Eula Bench. James and his wife, Janet, had two children, a daughter, Jamie, and a son, Dustin (deceased).

After James left military life, he made a career in the oilfields of West Texas for twenty years.